UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/AC.51/1993/5
12 March 1993

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMITTEE FOR PROGRAMME AND COORDINATION
Thirty-third session
10-14 May 1993
Item 4 (d) of the provisional agenda*

PROGRAMME QUESTIONS: EVALUATION

Follow-up report on the human rights programme

SUMMARY

The present report is submitted in accordance with the decision of the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its thirty-second session to follow up on the recommendations of the triennial review of the human rights programme.

A review of the implementation of these recommendations was conducted based on documentation and information from United Nations sources and responses to questionnaires and structured interviews. A number of problems of implementation were identified and recommendations to address these problems are made on the human rights computerized database, communication and coordination, publications, and translation of human rights instruments.

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INTRODUCTION

1. At its thirty-second session, in 1992, the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) examined the triennial review of the human rights programme carried out by the Secretary-General (E/AC.51/1992/3).

2. The Committee endorsed the recommendations contained in paragraphs 116, 117, and 119 to 127 of the triennial review. The Committee took note of the recommendation contained in paragraph 118. The present report has been prepared in accordance with the decision of the Committee to review the implementation of the recommendations contained in the triennial review in a follow-up report to be submitted to CPC in 1993. 1/

I. METHODOLOGY

3. The present report analyses activities associated with the recommendations on the four subprogrammes of the Centre on Human Rights. The report also draws on resolutions and recommendations emanating from the Commission on Human Rights, the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, related resolutions of the General Assembly, reports produced by the Centre on Human Rights, and information received from the Centre for Human Rights in answer to a detailed questionnaire submitted by the Central Evaluation Unit.

4. The report also contains the results of a questionnaire submitted to, and structured interviews with, the experts proposed by their Governments, and elected in their individual capacity by the Commission on Human Rights, as members of the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities. The questionnaire elicited a 96 per cent rate of response from the experts present at the meeting, who also participated in structured interviews with the CEU staff member in charge of this report. Due to lack of time, it was only possible to give structured interviews to 12 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) present at the meeting of the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities. The results of these interviews are given in this report where they appear pertinent.

5. For each subprogramme, the material is arranged in two sections: section A, which analyses information from the Centre and United Nations entities, and section B, which analyses the information stemming from responses to questionnaires and structured interviews conducted during the 1992 meeting of the Subcommission.

6. The recommendations in the final section are based on the degree of the implementation of the recommendations of the triennial review.

II. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

7. In 1991, the Secretary-General in his annual report on the work of the Organization 2/ stated that

> "Over the years, a certain dichotomy has marked the theme of human rights. This has become more pronounced in recent years. On the one side, there has been legitimate satisfaction at providing the world community with the International Bill of Human Rights, consisting of the Universal Declaration and the two International Covenants, followed by a corpus of other instruments. On the other, there has been dismay at the barbaric realities of the world in which we live, arising from the indiscriminate use of power to brutalize populations into submission. Public opinion now demands emphatically that the gulf between aspiration and fact be narrowed if the former is not to become totally ineffectual.
>
> "It would be unfair to belittle the positive accomplishments made so far. Much has been done to lay the foundations of a universal culture of human rights. Procedures have been developed whereby alleged violations are examined and discussed by the Commission on Human Rights and the various bodies established pursuant to the various conventions to monitor their implementation. Moreover, the consciousness of human rights that now pervades the globe has in no small degree beeen raised by the considerable thought and work that have been devoted to the cause by the United Nations and, under its influence or inspiration, by concerned individuals, non-governmental organizations and the media.
>
> "... Nevertheless, the fact must be squarely faced that the campaign for the protection of human rights has brought results mostly in conditions of relative normalcy and with responsive Governments. In other conditions, when human wrongs are committed in systematic fashion and on a massive scale - instances are widely dispersed over both time and place - the intergovernmental machinery of the United Nations has often been a helpless witness rather than an effective agent for checking their perpetration.
>
> "... With the heightened international interest in universalizing a regime of human rights, there is a marked and most welcome shift in public attitudes. To try to resist it would be politically as unwise as it is morally indefensible. It should be perceived as not so much a new departure as a more focused awareness of one of the requirements of peace.
>
> "I would emphasize that novel doctrines are not only not required on this issue; they can also upset established understandings. It is possible that in the ongoing debate among legal experts and political theoreticians, new concepts may emerge and gain broad acceptance. However, at the intergovernmental level, what the present stage in international affairs demands, in the context of human rights as much as in any other, is not a process of theorizing but a higher degree of cooperation and a combination of common sense and compassion."

8. In 1992 the Commission on Human Rights held two special sessions on the situation of human rights in the territory of the former Yugoslavia. A Special Rapporteur on this situation was appointed at the first special session and

submitted three reports on his investigations. The General Assembly in resolution 47/122, approved the provisional agenda and draft rules of procedure of the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights. An Assistant Secretary-General was appointed to head the Centre for Human Rights as of 1 January 1993.

III. IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TRIENNIAL REVIEW OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS PROGRAMME

Subprogramme 1. Implementation of international standards, instruments and procedures

9. The recommendations of the triennial review on this subprogramme were as follows:

> High priority should be given to establishing a computerized database of relevant technical data and information furnished by States parties and to research activities in accordance with recommendations 1 and 2 of the in-depth evaluation (E/AC.51/1989/2) (para. 115 of the triennial review).
>
> For effectiveness and economy the Centre's databases should be made compatible with those of other relevant United Nations entities, particularly UNHCR (para. 116).
>
> Efforts should be made to inform non-governmental organizations and individuals that local offices of the Department of Public Information, UNHCR, UNDP, WHO, FAO and the ILO can be utilized to transmit human rights materials to the appropriate United Nations human rights bodies. Such transmission would be without comment (para. 117).

10. During the CPC discussion on establishing a human rights database, an offer of financial assistance was made by one delegation. 3/

Part A - Documentation and information from United Nations sources

11. The Centre for Human Rights stated that it was regrettable that the computerized database had not yet been implemented since no financial resources had been made available to the Centre for this purpose as of the end of 1992. In order to carry out the recommendations of the Task Force which were endorsed by resolution 1991/20 of the Commission on Human Rights and by General Assembly resolutions 46/111 and 47/111, it will be necessary either to follow up the appeal contained in the Secretary-General's note verbale of 28 February 1992, requesting voluntary contributions to cover the instalment costs of the computerized database for the treaty bodies, or to make provision for funding the instalment costs of the data base from other resources.

12. On the Task Force referred to in recommendation 2 of the original evaluation report, the Centre stated that there have been no further meetings of the Task Force on Computerization since the one held in January 1990 inasmuch as the Task Force's work was fully completed at that time. The Centre recalled in this connection that the Task Force was established by the Secretary-General specifically to consider the feasibility of establishing a computerized database for the human rights treaty bodies and that their report dealt exclusively with

the database requirements of the treaty bodies. The Task Force included experts from UNHCR and ILO, and the system of computerization proposed in document E/CN.4/1990/39 is already designed to ensure compatibility with existing systems in other organizations of the United Nations, and with UNHCR in particular. Since the database has not yet been established, the Centre felt that the question of further coordination has to wait until such a time as it is established.

13. The General Assembly in resolution 47/128, paragraph 14, requested the Commission on Human Rights, at its forty-ninth session, to consider the recommendation by the fourth meeting of persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies that an expert group, from outside the Secretariat, be appointed to review comprehensively the existing information programme of the Centre for Human Rights with a view to developing a new information strategy that integrates the needs of the various sections within the human rights programme, including treaty bodies.

14. The Centre stated that the recommendation contained in paragraph 117 of the triennial report is brought regularly to the attention of the NGOs during briefing meetings convened periodically by the Centre on matters of concern to them. The local offices of DPI and UNDP transmit regularly to the Centre human rights material received by them. The Centre intends to formalize the current practice by way of written communications addressed to NGOs in consultative status which are active in the field of human rights.

Part B - Responses to the questionnaires and structured interviews

15. The establishment of a computerized database was considered a high priority by 70 per cent of experts elected to the Subcommission. Twelve per cent did not consider it a priority. The other experts expressed no opinion; structured interviews with them indicated that they thought the question of a computerized database had to be further analysed, the modus operandi would be very difficult to establish, and that there were other matters of higher priority for human rights including proper assistance by the Secretariat to the Rapporteurs.

16. Non-governmental organizations answering the same question in structured interviews gave the database high priority.

17. On the question of whether information had been furnished to the Centre which should be included in the database, 20 per cent of Government experts elected to the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities stated they had given such information to the Centre. This information ranged in time from five years to a month before the 1992 session of the Subcommission started and dealt with several studies of the Subcommission such as: state of emergency, administration of justice and immunity.

18. Almost all NGOs stated in structured interviews that they had given information to the Centre on ethnic conflicts to displaced persons, forced evictions, rights of minorities and violations of economic, social and cultural rights in various countries.

19. On the question of whether they had been informed that local offices such as those of UNHCR, UNDP, WHO, FAO, ILO and DPI Information Centres could be

utilized to transmit to the Centre communications concerning violations of human rights, 70 per cent of the experts stated they had not been informed.

20. Some experts were of the opinion that, while it was appropriate for those local offices to transmit pertinent information regarding human rights, it is important for them to use the appropriate procedures and channels with regard to communications concerning violations of human rights. Some experts observed that United Nations officers had to respect the terms of reference of their respective local offices vis-a-vis the Governments where they were located.

21. Over half of respondent NGOs stated in structured interviews that they had not been informed or had only heard of this procedure informally. It was felt that this information was very important and should be widely circulated.

Subprogramme 2. Elimination and prevention of discrimination, and protection of minorities and vulnerable groups

22. The recommendations of the triennial review on subprogramme 2 were as follows:

> Follow-up activities should be strengthened by assigning a full-time staff to activities for the Second Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination and engaging in a wider range of activities (para. 118).
>
> Communication and coordination with other United Nations entities, especially with United Nations Development Programme and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, on activities under subprogramme 2 should continue to be maintained on a regular basis and, since some non-governmental organizations' perceptions of the Centre's efforts at cooperation do not seem to tally with the Centre's perception, it is recommended that communication on these activities with non-governmental organizations be enhanced (para. 119).

23. The CPC did not endorse the recommendation in paragraph 118 of the triennial review but took note of it. Reservations were expressed by a number of delegations concerning the need for a full-time staff member for the Second Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination.

Part A - Documentation and information from United Nations sources

24. The Centre stated that as of the end of 1992 the staff member in charge of the Second Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination had been on mission to South Africa for more than six months. Before her departure she had been substantially assisted by a consultant in the implementation of all activities decided by General Assembly resolutions 39/16, 40/22, 42/47, and 46/85. However, this consultant has also been given some other assignments. No new activities have been started.

25. As regards the implementation of the Second Decade to Control Racism and Racial Discrimination, the Subcommission, at its forty-third session, by its resolution 1991/2, took note of the ways and means necessary to increase the effectiveness of United Nations action to combat racism and racial discrimination (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1991/11) prepared in accordance with the request of

the Subcommission contained in its resolution 1990/1 of 20 August 1990. It also renewed its request to the Secretary-General to: prepare an overview of current trends of racism, discrimination, intolerance and xenophobia affecting indigenous peoples, migrant workers and other vulnerable groups in society, as well as of measures taken by Governments against those phenomena and the effects of such measures; to submit the overview for consideration by the Subcommission at its forty-fourth session; to submit to the Subcommission at its forty-fourth session a report on serious incidents attributable to racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia in any part of the world, including measures taken by the Governments concerned in response to those incidents. It expressed its deep conviction that a Special Rapporteur of the Subcommission should be appointed to update the study on racial discrimination (E/CN.4/Sub.2/370 and Add.1-6 and Add.6/Corr.1) prepared in 1976 by Mr. Hernán Santa Cruz, in the light of recent trends of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia in many countries of the world.

26. The Commission, at its forty-eighth session, by its resolution 1992/8, decided to give thematic consideration each year to a selected topic within the plan of activities for 1990-1993, as listed in the annex to General Assembly resolution 42/47. The Commission decided that the topic for 1993 would be "Global study on the extent of dissemination of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination". It recommended to the General Assembly that it takes appropriate steps, in due course, to launch a third decade to combat racism and racial discrimination, to begin in 1993. 4/

27. The Centre stated that coordination meetings on the work of subprogramme 2 still need to be formalized. When and how such meetings can be institutionalized depends on not only the Centre for Human Rights, as the focal point, but other entities including NGOs.

28. The International Labour Office (ILO) and the Centre for Human Rights have established a joint working group for consultation and collaboration in relation to technical cooperation and human rights questions. A number of important results have already been achieved, including increased participation in each other's activities for the dissemination of information on human rights, and improved arrangements for the sharing of information. It is planned to hold the first joint training exercise for ILO staff and the staff of the Centre for Human Rights in the near future, in order to increase awareness among the officials of the two organizations. Another result of this closer cooperation was a joint ILO/Centre for Human Rights workshop on bonded child labour held in November 1992 in Islamabad, Pakistan, which adopted a plan of action for six countries (Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand) aiming at the elimination of this practice. 5/

29. In May 1992, UNESCO convened, in collaboration with the United Nations Centre for Human Rights, two informal consultations: the first on the preparation of the International Conference on Education for Human Rights and Democracy which will be held in Montreal (Canada) in 1993, and, the second on the design, planning, and content of a Manual on Human Rights for institution of higher education. UNESCO has also organized a workshop on the rights of the child in Trieste, Italy, in 1992, and plans another one to take place in Tunis, Tunisia, in 1993. The second edition of the World Directory of Human Rights Research and Training Institutions was published by UNESCO in May 1992. UNESCO

has also updated a chart of ratifications of major international human rights instruments.

30. A meeting between representatives of the United Nations Centre for Human Rights and UNDP took place in August 1992 in order to discuss a mechanism of review and identification of projects which could be implemented jointly between the Centre and UNDP or as part of funding under Indicative Planning Figures (IPF), with the Centre in an advisory role. UNDP and the Centre have agreed to consider accommodating Human Rights Officers within the UNDP field offices in countries where the Centre is undertaking large technical assistance programmes and collaborate in exploring further linkages between human rights and development.

31. UNHCR stated that its programme for the promotion of refugee law reflects increasing awareness of the need and will of the office to strengthen cooperation in this sphere with other entities, particularly with the Centre for Human Rights. 6/

Part B - Responses to the questionnaires and structured interviews

32. None of elected members of the Subcommission rated coordination by the Centre with other United Nations entities "very good". Approximately one third rated it "good" and another one third "inadequate". The remaining one third had "no opinion". Over half the NGOs interviewed considered such co-ordination "inadequate". None considered it "very good"; one considered it "good".

33. One expert thought that communications with NGOs should be spread out during the year and information transmitted to Rapporteurs in a regular basis. As of now documentation is received only after the meetings start.

34. Half of the elected members rated communication between the Centre and NGOs "very good" or "good"; the other half had "no opinion". The opinion of NGOs, however, was almost equally divided between those who thought communication was good and those who thought it was "inadequate".

35. One NGO, the International Bar Association (IBA), a Federation of National Legal Association and Individual Lawyers informed the Central Evaluation Unit that its World Conference had endorsed an action plan which includes the following measures to improve coordination with the Centre by, inter alia, establishing Human Rights Committees and liaison persons in IBA's organization members; liaison with human rights groups; and a proposal for a Human Rights Foundation.

Subprogramme 3. Publications, advisory services and technical cooperation in the field of human rights

36. The recommendations of the triennial review on subprogramme 3 are as follows:

> The Centre should continue to encourage Governments to develop programmes on human rights or with a human rights component, including human rights education (para. 120).

The distribution of United Nations publications on human rights should be made more effective by strengthening information networks (para. 121).

The translation of human rights publications into various languages, particularly local languages, should be expanded and non-governmental organizations' expertise in this area utilized more fully. The Secretariat should formalize and announce procedures for the review of translated versions of the various instruments, as proposed in recommendation 10 of the in-depth evaluation (E/AC.51/1989/2) (para. 122).

Production of audio-visual material on human rights should be undertaken on a larger scale (para. 123).

Translation of major human rights instruments into local languages should be accelerated and distribution improved with more assistance of non-governmental organizations (para. 124).

Part A - Documentation and information from United Nations sources

37. The Centre stated that through its Advisory Services and Technical Co-operation activities, it is becoming increasingly involved in human rights training/education activities conducted at the national level. The Centre is currently revising the content and quality of its main publications, in particular the United Nations Yearbook and the Bulletin. It is also exploring the possibility of producing publications on recycled paper thereby reducing considerably the cost and making these publications more appropriate for distribution to the general public in developing countries. However, it is clear that one ad hoc seminar or course can have few, if any, long-term, substantial effects. For this reason, the Centre is now incorporating, into its training courses, an approach which is designed to "teach the teachers". Manuals for a wide range of special audiences are being developed and will include recommendations for effective pedagogical techniques. This approach is expected to allow the Centre to reach the maximum audience with the resources available.

38. As regards publications, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights at its sixth session recalled that, at its fourth and fifth sessions, it requested the Secretary-General to undertake the preparation of a brochure or booklet describing in detail the work of the Committee (E/1990/23, para. 302 and E/1991/23, para. 260). It took note, in that regard, of Fact Sheet No. 16, published in connection with the World Public Information Campaign for Human Rights, entitled "The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights". The Committee considered that this publication did not replace the need for a booklet and that, in the light of the continuing widespread lack of awareness of the Committee's functions, procedures and preoccupations, and of the measures it had taken, there remained a pressing need for a detailed and informative analysis to be made widely available. The Committee therefore requested the Secretary-General to make appropriate arrangements, as soon as possible, to ensure the preparation of such an analysis. For this purpose it authorized its Chairman to pursue the matter with the secretariat and to inform it at its seventh session in 1993 of the progress achieved. 7/

39. The Centre stated that publications of the Centre for Human Rights are distributed through a number of different channels. The Department of Public Information forwards such materials to the United Nations Information Centres and to those UNDP offices which have taken over UNIC functions.

40. Another important way in which the publications of the Centre are disseminated is in response to direct requests. The External Relations and Information Section of the Centre is charged with the responsibility of fulfilling specific requests for information. The number of requests it receives is growing rapidly and is expected to increase further. A number of administrative changes are now being considered in an effort to reduce the time lag between receipt of a request and dispatch of information. However, the Centre noted that the present shortage of personnel to deal with information requests will militate against any serious improvement in this respect, particularly if the expected increase in the number of requests occurs.

41. The Centre stated also it maintains a mailing list of persons who are sent publications as they appear. The suggestion of the Human Rights Committee that members of the various human rights bodies be included in this list has been implemented.

42. Another possible means of enhancing distribution is co-opting other bodies and agencies in the effort to ensure wider dissemination of United Nations human rights publications. It may also be useful to explore new channels for the distribution of publications outside the United Nations system. The External Relations and Information Section of the Centre is exploring the implications of such an initiative and will be approaching a number of organizations seeking their cooperation and support.

43. The need for close cooperation between the Centre for Human Rights and the Department of Public Information was stressed in General Assembly resolution 47/128, paragraph 12, calling for the implementation of the aims established for the World Campaign. The resolution also stressed the need for the United Nations to harmonize its activities in the field of human rights with those of other organizations, including the International Committee of the Red Cross with regard to the dissemination of information on international humanitarian law, and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, with regard to education for human rights. Paragraph 13 of the resolution cited also requested the Secretary-General to take advantage, as much as possible, of the collaboration of non-governmental organizations for, inter alia, the dissemination of human rights materials, with a view to increasing universal awareness of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

44. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) adopted resolution 45/2 on "the establishment of a depository centre for United Nations Human Rights materials", in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 43/140 and resolution 1988/73 of the Commission on Human Rights. The depository centre for United Nations Human Rights materials has since been established in the ESCAP Library and is functioning.

45. The Centre stated that the core component of any human rights promotional programme must inevitably be the instruments themselves. The importance of translating major international human rights instruments into local and regional

languages and of ensuring their wide dissemination has been emphasized by both the General Assembly and the Commission on numerous occasions. In relation to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the translation project has had considerable success. In its 1991 report to the Commission, the Centre states that 81 language versions of the Declaration of Human Rights have been printed. In its 1992 report to the General Assembly, DPI stated that over 90 language versions have been prepared.

46. The Centre for Human Rights is responsible for locating or commissioning language versions of human rights instruments and for checking the accuracy of those it obtains. The Centre believes that its role should be to produce camera-ready copies of particular translations, while DPI should be able to ensure quick printing and effective dissemination. The Centre is making an effort to assess the status of the translation project to date and, in doing so, to develop a list of language versions which still need to be located or commissioned. Dissemination is an essential step in the process of making these instruments known and could perhaps involve the active participation of local NGOs and United Nations agencies to assist in effective distribution.

47. The Centre stated that all aspects of the translation project, not just matters of distribution, would benefit from the assistance of, and coordination between, other United Nations bodies. UNESCO, for instance, has had occasion to commission translations of various human rights instruments.

48. With a view to promoting implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, UNESCO is assisting in translating the text of the Convention into various languages and in disseminating it widely.

49. The Centre feels it is essential that when United Nations agencies are involved in such activities, that it is informed and supplied with a copy of the text. Other details of the translation and its distribution should also be forwarded. These would be placed on file and contribute to the development, within the Centre, of an information bank of texts and translations.

50. Proposals on coordination were presented to the Fourth Inter-Agency Meeting convened by the Centre for Human Rights on 25 June 1992. The Centre hopes to follow up on these proposals and will be further discussing coordination matters with the Department of Public Information.

Part B. Responses to questionnaires and structured interviews

51. Over half of the experts felt that the publications by the Centre were "good" and an additional 8 per cent thought they were "very good", while 20 per cent had "no opinion". Four experts considered those publications "inadequate", and expressed the opinions that they were too one-dimensional; tended to be self-reproducing; reflected the recruitment system of the Centre as well as the Centre's pool of consultants; had only one general Western approach to human rights issues; the "language" used in the publications was a problem; the way publications were written was not easily understood and did not entice readers.

52. Most NGOs interviewed felt the Centre's publications were good. Some, however, felt they were inadequate due to self-censorship and poor coverage.

For example, they felt a need for more details than provided in the Fact Sheets, especially in regard to specific rights such as food, health and housing. One respondent said the Centre's publications compared poorly with publications produced by other agencies of the United Nations such as UNHCR, ILO and WHO.

53. Respondents were asked to rank in order of importance six activities concerning the advisory services and publications of the Centre. The elected experts thought that "encouragement of government programmes with a human rights education component," and the "translation of major human rights instruments into local languages" were the most important. The "production of audio-visual material on human rights" and "NGO involvement in the distribution of human rights materials" were considered the least important.

54. The experts made the following suggestions: more translation of human rights instruments into local languages; more training of national officers; assistance to democratic governments to improve the judiciary and law enforcement systems in conjunction with the Centre on Human Rights; continue advisory services linked with the studies by special representatives in order to report on the obstacles encountered by Governments in effecting human rights. One expert felt that there should be a standing commission on human rights (similar to the Conference on Disarmament) that would meet throughout the year and look at all importance issues.

55. The NGOs made the following suggestions: it was important that advisory services included assistance in the drafting of constitutions and laws that conformed with human rights; encourage human rights education through local media (such as radio); train grassroots groups to publicize human rights-related activities; audio-visual materials should be produced locally for local audiences. One respondent felt that the entire programme of advisory services should be evaluated with NGO participation. Some NGOs stated that audio-visual materials should be geared to a particular audience; and therefore NGOs should be engaged in their production.

Subprogramme 4. Standard-setting, research and studies

56. The recommendations of the triennial review on this subprogramme were as follows:

> The procedures envisaged in recommendation 11 of the in-depth evaluation (E/AC.51/1989/2) should continue to be implemented. Consultations with United Nations agencies should take place on a regular basis, and the involvement of non-governmental organizations in the drafting stages of new instruments should be encouraged (para. 125).
>
> Urgent efforts should be made to establish a human rights database (para. 126).
>
> The task force proposed in recommendation 13 of the in-depth evaluation (E/AC.51/1989/2) should be established (para. 127).

57. As regards the recommendation in paragraph 125, the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) was of the view that, "in the drafting of any new international instruments, as may be decided, the involvement of

non-governmental organizations would be in conformity with existing practices". 8/

Part A - Documentation and information from United Nations sources

58. Several working groups of the Commission on Human Rights and the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities involved representatives of Governments, United Nations agencies, international organizations and NGOs in their consideration of draft declarations in their respective areas of concern. These working groups met during the course of the past year as follows: working group of the Commission on the draft declaration on enforced and involuntary disappearances (29 October-8 November 1991); working group of the Commission on the rights of persons belonging to national, ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities (2-13 December 1991); working group of the Commission on the draft declaration on the right and responsibility of individuals, groups and organs of society to promote and protect universally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms (13-24 January 1992); working group of the Subcommission on indigenous populations (20-31 July 1992), dealing with the draft declaration on indigenous rights.

59. In connection with the drafting of new instruments, it should also be noted that the Commission on Human Rights, by resolution 1992/66 of 4 March 1992, endorsed the decision of the Subcommission to set up an inter-sessional working group. It recommended that such a group should be composed of one representative of each regional group and requested it to prepare, for examination by all the experts of the Subcommission and for adoption by the Subcommission at its forty-fourth session, a list of specific proposals in draft decision format, taking into consideration the proposals and recommendations studied by the Subcommission at its forty-third session and contained in the report of the aforementioned sessional working group as well as in the report submitted to the Commission by the Chairman of the Subcommission on the work of its forty-third session (E/CN.4/1992/46). 9/

60. The Centre stated that due to the lack of resources, no progress has been made in the establishment of the database referred to in the recommendation (see paras. 11 to 16 above).

61. The task force referred to in the last recommendation was to "consist of representatives of the Secretariat entities and of the specialized agencies having human rights elements and/or aspects in their programmes" and "look into ways and means of strengthening co-ordination in the planning and implementation of activities of joint interest". 10/ The Centre stated that it has not been able to effectively assume the coordination role on human rights questions vis-à-vis other Secretariat entities and agencies.

62. In a document before the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities at its forty-fourth session, the ILO stated that "ILO regularly takes an active part in the United Nations Commission on Human Rights and in its Subcommission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, as well as the Subcommission's Working Groups on Indigenous Populations and on Contemporary Forms of Slavery. ILO also takes an active part in various treaty bodies established to supervise United Nations human rights instruments, such as the Human Rights Committee, the Committee on Economic,

Social and Cultural Rights, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. ILO has also been working with the Committee on the Rights of the Child to define the participation of ILO in the supervisory procedures envisaged for the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Part B - Responses to questionnaires and structured interviews

63. In structured interviews the experts stated that they considered consultations with other agencies should be done on a regular basis. They also felt that documentation for meetings should be sent well in advance to give members of the Commission, Subcommission and Committees time to study it. This would maximize the results of meetings. Assistance to Rapporteurs and experts should be improved both in quantity and degree. Some experts felt that a number of staff members seemed to think of human rights in terms of procedure, losing sight of the human dimension. The views of the experts on the database are given in paragraph 54 above.

64. In other observations, some experts recalled they were told that to obtain information they would need to make a "formal request". Some experts also stated that there was no assistance or advice to new members, a meager assistance to thematic and country rapporteurs, and no willingness from the staff to conduct research.

65. Some NGOs interviewed commented that the existence of over 50 separate procedures for the treatment of human rights violations made it difficult for them to categorize cases so they could be used effectively in United Nations activities and, ultimately, reflected in the work involved in standard setting. Resources available for this work seemed to be inadequate. One NGO stated that in certain instances it was left to the NGOs to brief the experts on human rights problems.

66. Some experts felt that there was no continuity in the assistance provided to the working groups, which most of the time were served by temporary help.

67. One expert felt it would be useful to have a focal point to handle communications between the Commission and the Subcommission. Reservations were also expressed by two experts about staff members "working from home".

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

68. The Committee may wish to consider adopting the following recommendations:

Subprogramme 1. Implementation of international standards, instruments and procedures

69. Recommendation 1: The Centre should establish a human rights database by the end of 1993, fully utilizing existing or pledged resources. The database should be fully responsive to the recommendation of the Task Force on Computerization contained in document E/CN.4/1990/39 and should also include, if feasible, all previous information submitted by Governments, experts and accredited non-governmental organizations.

70. Recommendation 2: A note verbale should be sent to Member States and to all official participants in human rights bodies informing them that local offices can be utilized to transmit human rights materials to the appropriate United nations human rights bodies; such transmission would be without comment. A letter with the same information should be sent to NGOs credited with ECOSOC. Both actions should be taken by the end of 1993.

Subprogramme 2. Elimination and prevention of discrimination and protection of minorities and vulnerable groups

71. Recommendation 3: There should be continuity in the support of activities concerning the Second Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination.

Subprogramme 3. Publications, advisory services and technical cooperation in the field of human rights

72. Recommendation 4: Efforts should be made to improve communication both between United Nations entities and the Centre, and the Centre and NGOs.

73. Recommendation 5: Priority should continue to be given to the translation of all major human rights instruments into local languages, and their wide distribution.

Subprogramme 4. Standard-setting, research and studies

74. Recommendation 6: The task force proposed in recommendation 13 of the in-depth evaluation should be established and report to ACC on its findings and recommendations by the end of 1993.

Notes

1/ A/47/16 (Part I), paras. 130-136.

2/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 1 (A/46/1), pp. 4-5.

3/ A/47/16 (Part I), para. 132.

4/ E/CN.4/Sub.2/1992/1/Add.1, paras. 56-58.

5/ E/CN.4/Sub.2/1992/5, paras. 38-39.

6/ A/AC.96/299, para. 6.

7/ E/1992/23, para. 375.

8/ A/47/16 (Part 1), para. 134.

9/ E/CN.4/Sub.2/1992/3, para. 3.

10/ E/AC.51/1989/2, para. 140.

ANNEX

RESULTS OF QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY OF GOVERNMENT EXPERTS, MEMBERS OF THE SUBCOMMISSION ON PREVENTION OF DISCRIMINATION AND PROTECTION OF MINORITIES

Number of questionnaires distributed	25
Number of responses	24
Response rate	96 per cent

		Number of Respondents	Percentage
1.	[This question concerned the identity of the respondent.]		
2.	Do you consider the establishment of a United Nations computerized database on human rights a high priority?		
	Yes	17	70.8
	No	3	12.5
	No opinion	4	16.7
3.	Have you furnished information to the Centre which you consider should be included in the database?		
	Yes	5	20.8
	No	17	70.8
	No opinion	2	8.4
4.	Have you been informed that local offices such as those of UNHCR, UNDP, WHO, FAO and ILO and United Nations Information Centres can be utilized to transmit human rights materials, such as written communications concerning human rights violations, to the Centre?		
	Yes	5	20.8
	No	17	70.8
	No opinion	2	8.4
5.	In your experience, how would you rate coordination by the Centre with other United Nations entities, especially UNDP and UNHCR?		
	Very good	-	-
	Good	7	29.2
	Inadequate	8	33.3
	No opinion	9	37.5

	Number of respondents	Percentage
6. How would you rate communication by the Centre with NGOs?		
Very good	1	4.2
Good	11	45.8
Inadequate	-	-
No opinion	12	50.0
7. How do you rate the coverage by the Centre's publications of human rights subjects?		
Very good	2	8.3
Good	13	54.2
Inadequate	4	16.7
No opinion	5	20.8

8. Concerning advisory services and/or publications of the Centre, please rank the following activities in order of importance:

	Rankings
a. Encouragement of Government programmes with a human rights education component	1st
b. Production of audio-visual material on human rights	4th
c. Translation of major human rights instruments into local languages	2nd
d. Effective distribution of human rights publications	3rd
e. NGO involvement in the distribution of human rights materials	5th

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